

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claims 1-11 (canceled)

Claim 12 (currently amended): A granule comprising a protein core and a hydrated barrier material selected from the group consisting of an inorganic salt, an organic acid salt, a sugar, a polysaccharide, a lipid, and a polymer, wherein the hydrated barrier material is coated over the protein core, wherein the granule has moderate or high water activity.

Claim 13 (currently amended): The granule of claim 12, wherein the moderate or high water activity is greater than 0.25.

Claim 14 (currently amended): The granule of claim 12, wherein the moderate or high water activity is greater than 0.30.

Claim 15 (currently amended): The granule of claim 12, wherein the moderate or high water activity is greater than 0.35.

Claim 16 (currently amended): The granule of claim 12, wherein the hydrated barrier material is an inorganic salt.

Claim 17 (currently amended): The granule of claim 16, wherein the inorganic salt is selected from the group consisting of magnesium sulfate heptahydrate, zinc sulfate heptahydrate, and sodium phosphate dibasic heptahydrate, ~~magnesium nitrate hexahydrate, sodium citrate dehydrate or magnesium acetate tetrahydrate.~~

Claim 18 (currently amended): The granule of claim 16, wherein the protein is an enzyme.

Claim 19 (currently amended): The granule of claim 18, wherein the protein is an enzyme ~~[[is]]~~ selected from the group consisting of a ~~hydrolases~~ hydrolase, ~~an~~ oxidases oxidase, ~~a~~ transferases transferase, ~~a~~ dehydratases dehydratase, ~~a~~ reductases reductase, ~~a~~ hemicellulases hemicellulase, ~~an~~ isomerases isomerase, and ~~a mixtures~~ mixture thereof.

Claim 20 (currently amended): The granule of claim 18, wherein the enzyme is ~~[[a]]~~ subtilisin subtilisin protease.

Claim 21 (currently amended): The granule of claim 16, further comprising one or more additional coating layers.

Claim 22 (currently amended): The granule of claim 21, wherein the one or more additional coating layers comprises an outer coating over the hydrated barrier coat, wherein the outer coating is selected from the group consisting of a vinyl ~~polymers~~ polymer, a cellulose ~~derivatives~~ derivative, polyethylene glycol, polyethylene oxide, chitosan, gum Arabic, xanthan, carrageenan, a latex ~~polymers~~ polymer, and an enteric ~~coatings~~ coating.

Claim 23 (currently amended): The granule of claim 21, wherein the one or more additional coating layers comprises a coating that resists oxidation of the protein by ~~bleach~~ a bleaching agent.

Claim 24 (currently amended): The granule of claim 21, wherein the one or more additional coating layers ~~comprise~~ comprises one or more of plasticizers, extenders, lubricants, pigments, and enzymes.

Claim 25 (currently amended): A granule comprising~~[[;]]~~:
an enzyme core;
a hydrated inorganic barrier salt coated onto the enzyme core, wherein the enzyme core coated with the hydrated inorganic barrier salt ~~having~~ has moderate or high water activity greater

than 0.25; and

an outer coating over the hydrated inorganic barrier salt.

Claim 26 (currently amended): The granule of claim 25, wherein the enzyme core comprises an enzyme selected from the group consisting of a hydrolases hydrolase, an oxidases oxidase, a transferases transferase, a dehydratases dehydratase, a reductases reductase, a hemicellulases hemicellulase, an isomerases isomerase, and a mixtures mixture thereof.

Claim 27 (currently amended): The granule of claim 26, wherein the inorganic barrier salt is selected from the group consisting of magnesium sulfate heptahydrate, zinc sulfate heptahydrate, sodium phosphate dibasic heptahydrate, and magnesium nitrate hexahydrate; ~~sodium citrate dehydrate or magnesium acetate tetrahydrate.~~

Claim 28 (currently amended): The granule of claim 27, wherein the enzyme core comprises a seed particle coated with an enzyme layer.

Claim 29 (currently amended): A method of producing the granule of claim 25, comprising:

~~providing the enzyme core; and~~

coating the hydrated inorganic barrier salt onto the enzyme core at 55° C or about 50° C; ~~wherein the granule has moderate or high water activity greater than 0.25 and~~

adding an outer coating over the hydrated inorganic barrier salt, wherein the granule exhibiting exhibits greater percent retained enzyme activity compared to an identical reference granule coated with the hydrated barrier material at 70° C, wherein the retained enzyme activity is measured after storage of the granule and the identical reference granule ~~coated with the hydrated barrier material~~ at 70° C in detergent for at least 14 days.

Claim 30 (currently amended): A method of producing the granule of claim 12, comprising:

~~providing the protein core; and~~

coating the hydrated barrier material onto the protein core at 55° C or about 50° C.

Claim 31 (currently amended): The method of claim 30, further comprising adding an outer coating over the hydrated barrier material, wherein the granule ~~exhibiting~~ exhibits greater percent retained protein activity compared to a an identical ~~test~~ reference granule coated with the hydrated barrier material at 70° C, wherein the retained protein activity is measured after storage of the granule and the ~~[[test]]~~ reference granule in detergent for at least 14 days.

Claim 32 (new): The method of claim 31, wherein the protein is an enzyme.

Claim 33 (new): The method of claim 12, wherein the hydrated barrier material is an organic acid salt.

Claim 34 (new): The method of claim 33, wherein the organic acid salt is sodium citrate dihydrate or magnesium acetate tetrahydrate.